Cover Letters

A cover letter is used to introduce your resume. It will give you an opportunity to describe your qualifications as it relates to the position you are applying to. It is essential to customize or tailor your cover letter to the specific job posting and/or organization to which you are sending your cover letter and resume.

What to include:

- **Paragraph one: Introduction**
  A brief introduction on why you are writing this cover letter
  - Reference the *specific* position you are interested in. Mention how you found it, or reference the contact that referred you
  - Explain why you are interested in the role/organization
  - Include a closing sentence that ties in why you feel you are qualified for this position

- **Paragraph Two: Highlight your qualifications-“Prove” your skills**
  Highlight three to five of your *relevant* experiences that *directly* relate them to the job description and/or company
  - Feel free to pull experiences from your education, work experience, volunteer work, team projects, etc
  - For example- if the employer is seeking someone who has experience with Microsoft Excel, explain or “prove” when, how and/or where you used this skill.

- **Paragraph Three: Closing Statement**
  Thank the person for their time and consideration and include your contact information, both email and phone number

Key Tips:

- Take the time to review the company literature, website, job posting, etc. to determine the company’s values and identity, and include your accomplishments and skills that align with the company
- Describe 3-5 relevant examples/accomplishments that would highlight your skills and abilities that would make you the best fit for the position
- Use the job description as your “cheat sheet”- The examples used throughout your cover letter should be relevant to what is stated in the job description
- Do not repeat word-for-word what is on your resume
- Keep it brief (one page) and in a professional format. The longer the letter, the less likely it will be read
- Type the cover letter, but sign it if you are sending a hard copy
- Proofread, proofread, and proofread! Have someone else proofread it, and then proofread it again
- Ensure your email address and voicemail greeting are professional and appropriate

**Did You Know...??**

*Employers spend less than 30 seconds looking over your cover letter*
Dear Mr. / Ms. __________:  (Or you may use Sir or Madam or To Whom It May Concern)

**Introduction**: The first paragraph explains the reason you are writing the letter. State your intention clearly. Include the reason you are contacting the person, or include the title of the position to which you are applying and how you learned about the opening (include the name of the source where you saw the posting). If a networking contact referred you to the organization, mention the person’s name and explain your connection. NOTE: Do not start with, “My name is….” as your name is included at the bottom of the letter.

**Body**: The body of the letter is where you describe your experiences and qualifications, and/or where you adapt your cover letter to the specific job and company/organization. Emphasize relevant achievements, skills, and/or experiences. Convey to the prospective employer: why you are a solid candidate for the position; demonstrate your understanding of the business; and explain why you will be an asset. Ensure that all experiences and skills you mention are also included in your résumé.

**Closing**: The final paragraph should thank the contact for considering you for the position. Be sure to include how and when you may be contacted. Always include your email and telephone number.

Sincerely,

**SIGNATURE**

Your Name Typed
In this example, we have a job description followed by a cover letter written specifically for this role. Follow the color coded highlighting to see how to use the language and skills the employer is looking for, within your cover letter, when describing your own experience.

Job Description:

Audit Staff Accountant

Western Financial Advisors
As an Audit Staff Accountant with Financial Advisors Inc, you will work on various assigned segments of engagements, in some instances assuming substantial responsibility (under supervision) for small accounting engagements involving compiled or reviewed financial statements and tax returns.

QUALIFICATIONS: Must have a bachelor's degree, MBA in accounting or finance preferred. Ideal candidates should have at least three years of solid, relevant work experience.

REQUIRED SKILLS: Possess strong understanding of auditing principles, financial statements, and analytical and problem solving skills. Demonstrate a solid grasp of business concepts, realistic judgment, and quantitative and critical thinking skills. Candidates will have strong interpersonal skills and ability to interact with upper management and an ability to plan, organize, and prioritize multiple tasks within a defined time period.

This excellent opportunity includes a highly professional working environment, as well as a competitive salary based on experience and a performance bonus. This position also includes fringe benefits including paid health care.
August 12, 2013

Western Financial Advisors
259 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

To Whom It May Concern:

I am enclosing my resume for the Audit Staff Accountant position posted on WayneBizCareers.com. I am a recent MBA graduate from Wayne State University concentrating in accounting and finance. I believe this education combined with my professional experience in accounting and corporate finance make me an ideal candidate for the Audit Staff Accountant role.

For four years prior to graduate school I worked as a collateral auditor with Smith & Adams. In this position I was responsible for reconciling outstanding audit issues and preparing audit programs. In my current intern role within the finance department of ABC Corporation I have provided cost analysis reports for projects and presented to the budget committee for the upcoming fiscal year. Through these projects I assisted with contract agreements for new office equipment in excess of $3 million.

I am confident I bring a unique skill set combining corporate finance with audit experience would make me an asset to the Western Financial Advisors team as an Audit Staff Accountant. I look forward to speaking with you further about this role at your earliest convenience. Please contact me via email at bizcareers@wayne.edu or phone at (313) 577-4781.

Sincerely,

John Doe
Dear Mr. Elder:

Rachel Koehler (current president of the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Marketing Association) suggested I contact you about marketing opportunities that you may know of in your role as chairman of the Cincinnati Incubator marketing board.

Currently, I am a business student looking to relocate to Cincinnati this summer for an internship opportunity. I am eager to find a technology start up that needs marketing assistance in introducing innovations to various business markets. I believe Sabatino Specialties is this company.

I am a great fit for an emerging technology based company. Since working toward my degree I have gained experience in market research as well as interacting with current and potential clients. As my resume highlights, I understand how to position and present new marketing concepts to business audiences, such as emphasizing benefits and addressing target customer needs and concerns.

I appreciate any ideas, referrals or assistance you can offer. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in this search. Please contact me via email at bizcareers@wayne.edu or phone at (313) 577-4781.

Sincerely,

Ericka Career
August 12, 2013

Human Resources
XPD Stores
1234 Name Street
Troy, MI 48579

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express interest in the summer marketing internship with XPD Stores that I recently found on the XPD human resources website. As a current marketing major at Wayne State University I am eager to contribute my education and skills to a successful retail organization, such as XPD Stores.

Throughout my academic career at Wayne State I have worked full-time in a variety of retail roles. In my current role at JCPenney I lead a sales team and oversee merchandising within the Men’s Apparel department. I was recently promoted to this role after consistently exceeding sales goals and demonstrating leadership potential. As a business student pursuing a Marketing degree I have gained a strong understanding of business principles and applied those through various projects. In one course project I created a merchandising system for a start-up retail company. This project provided insight into incorporating technology into a retail sales environment, in which I could bring to XPD Stores as a summer marketing intern.

My success in the retail industry combined with my education make me the ideal candidate for the summer marketing internship with XPD Stores. I look forward to speaking with you about this opportunity in the near future. Please contact me via email at bizcareers@wayne.edu or phone at (313) 577-4781.

Sincerely,

John Smith